

Fort Matanzas--The Little Fort With the Big Job

Standards-Based Activities (4th-5th grade)

NOTE: This activity set can stand alone or be used as an introduction for a fieldtrip to Fort Matanzas National Monument, St. Augustine, Florida (904) 471-0116

Contents:

- 1) Reading**
- 2) Writing**
- 3) Math**
- 4) Answer Page**

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For more Florida Standards-based activities in science and social studies,

check out <http://pelotes.jea.com>.

Fort Matanzas - The Little Fort with the Big Job

Anastasia Island, a long, thin barrier island, stretches for nearly sixteen miles from the St. Augustine Inlet south to the Matanzas Inlet. Behind this island is the Matanzas River. This river and the Matanzas Inlet were called the "backdoor to St. Augustine", and they would be a good way for enemies to try to sneak up on St. Augustine from the rear.

The Spanish were concerned about this potential danger, and as early as 1569 they built a wooden watchtower surrounded by a stockade somewhere near the south end of Anastasia Island to keep watch against enemies approaching from the south. This was just a lookout tower as it was not strong enough to hold cannons. If a strange ship was sighted, the Spanish could somehow signal St. Augustine or send a boat with a warning message. No doubt several such towers were built to replace the previous ones which fell down or were washed away, but no sign of any has ever been found. Only Spanish records tell us about the wooden watchtowers at Matanzas.

Pirates did attack from the south at least twice. In 1683 English pirates sneaked up on the unarmed tower at dawn, captured it, and forced one of the soldiers to lead them up the river to St. Augustine. The soldier cleverly led the pirates up a dead-end creek instead and escaped to warn St. Augustine. Three years later, another group of pirates landed south of the Matanzas tower, but St. Augustine had been warned about them, too, and Spanish soldiers routed the pirates before they got far.

With the British in the Carolinas work started in 1672 on the Castillo de San Marcos, the large, coquina fort built to protect the main inlet and harbor at St. Augustine. Perhaps there was some thought to building a more substantial tower at Matanzas, but the Castillo, which took twenty-three years to build, occupied all the available money and manpower.

In 1736 the engineer Antonio de Arredondo was sent to Florida by the Spanish Crown to inspect the fortifications. In his report he recommended that a tower that could mount cannon be built at Matanzas, but when he returned to St. Augustine two years later, the hostilities with British Georgia were heating up so much that it was decided to modernize the Castillo instead and install bombproof vaults and more cannon there. Matanzas would have to wait.

However, the British under James Oglethorpe attacked St. Augustine in 1740. His plan was to blockade the two inlets. The Spanish would not be able to send a boat for help, and supply ships would not be able to land. They would run out of food and ammunition and be forced to surrender. Nevertheless, the Spanish were able to get a message out by boat through the Matanzas Inlet before the blockade was tightened. The boat made it to Cuba and brought back a fleet of supply ships which anchored near Mosquito Inlet 60 miles to the south. A courier took word to St. Augustine that supplies had arrived. Coincidentally, the British ship, which had been guarding the Matanzas Inlet, had just received orders to return to St. Augustine. So the way was clear to send small,

shallow-draft boats out the Matanzas Inlet to meet the boats at Mosquito Inlet and bring the food in up the Matanzas River, through the back door.

Oglethorpe gave up his siege and returned to Georgia, but his attack had shown again the importance of the Matanzas Inlet. Not only was it St. Augustine's lifeline to the outside, but it was also a weak point, a place where the British might try to sneak in, sail up the river, and hit St. Augustine from the rear. And Spanish Governor Montiano knew the British would try again. He needed a fort at Matanzas.

However, fortifications could not be erected without expressed royal permission, but sending a request to the king back in Spain and getting a reply would take too long. What should he do? Montiano conferred with his advisors, and they found a way. Along with Arredondo's recommendation there had been a royal communication that authorized Montiano to perform whatever repairs he judged necessary for the security of St. Augustine. The decision was made to begin construction of Fort Matanzas without delay, and this time, it would be a coquina fort, small and built in a hurry, but built to last and built for cannon.

Even before the fort was finished, the British attacked. However, a Spanish sloop and galley stationed just inside the inlet repulsed them. By the time the British returned the next year (1742), the five cannon from the fort itself forced the British to retreat. Another attempt in 1743 was likewise unsuccessful. And so the soldiers came to Matanzas for 30 day tours of duty. They kept watch night and day, summer and winter, knowing they had the important job of protecting their homes and families back in St. Augustine. It does not always take something (or someone) big to do an important job. Little Fort Matanzas and its handful of soldiers did their job well. No one, neither the British nor the pirates, ever attacked St. Augustine again, once Fort Matanzas was built to guard the back door.

Sources:

Arana, Luis Rafael. "Fort Matanzas: Guardian of St. Augustine's back door". St. Augustine, FL: Castillo de San Marcos, 1978.
[Http://www.nps.gov/foma/home/home/htm](http://www.nps.gov/foma/home/home/htm). "Fort Matanzas On Line" National Park Service, Fort Matanzas National Monument, 2001.

Fort Matanzas - The Little Fort with the Big Job

Standards-Based Reading Questions

1. What shows that the Spanish were concerned early about the potential danger of an unguarded inlet at Matanzas? Use details and information from the article to support your answer.

**Read
Think
Explain**

2. Why was Fort Matanzas built?
- a) To guard the main inlet to St. Augustine
 - b) To fight the pirates
 - c) To guard the back way into St. Augustine
 - d) To guard against the French
3. Who was Montiano?
- a) A Spanish engineer
 - b) A British general
 - c) Governor of St. Augustine
 - d) Governor of Cuba
4. Spanish soldiers "routed" the pirates. Using context clues, what is the meaning of the Word "routed"?
- a) narrowly win against
 - b) drive off overwhelmingly
 - c) show the correct way to
 - d) surrender to

Fort Matanzas - The Little Fort with the Big Job Standards-Based Reading Questions--Continued

5. Why was it important to guard the Matanzas Inlet. There are at least two reasons. Use details and information from the article to support your answer.

**Read
Think
Explain**

Fort Matanzas - The Little Fort with the Big Job Standards-Based Writing Questions

1. The Spanish soldiers spent a month at a time at little Fort Matanzas. Think about being in a small, isolated place without electricity or refrigeration. Write to explain what their life might have been like there.
2. The soldiers' lives at Matanzas might have been boring, but they had an important job to do. Think about a time when you were given an important job that perhaps you did not want to do at first. Write a story about this time and what you did.

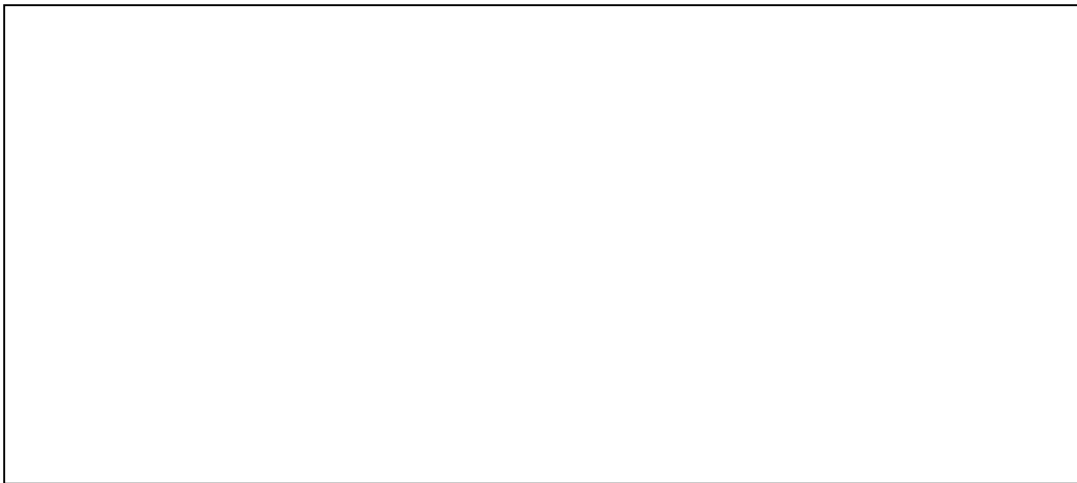
Fort Matanzas - The Little Fort with the Big Job

Standards-Based Math Questions

1. The base of Fort Matanzas is square. If one side is 49.5 feet, what is the perimeter of the fort in yards?
 - a. 16.5 yards
 - b. 66.0 yards
 - c. 198.0 yards
 - d. 594.0 yards

2. The Spanish used a measurement called a "vara" which is equal to 33 of our inches. The sides of Fort Matanzas are 49.5 feet at the base. How long is each side of Fort Matanzas in varas? Show your work.

THINK
SOLVE
EXPLAIN



3. The soldiers had to clean the cistern (water tank) at the fort periodically to keep the water clean. They would wait until it was getting low, empty the cistern into barrels, clean and scrub the cistern, and pour the barrels back in. If there was still 250 gallons of water in the cistern, how long would it take to scoop out the water using a two gallon bucket if they could scoop out two bucketfuls each minute? Round your answer to the nearest minute.
 - a. 32 minutes
 - b. 50 minutes
 - c. 63 minutes
 - d. 125 minutes

Fort Matanzas - The Little Fort with the Big Job
Standards-Based Math Questions

4. The men were sent to Fort Matanzas for a month at a time. It did not always work out evenly. The chart below shows how many months each of these six friends spent at Matanzas over a five-year period.

Fort Matanzas Duty

| Name | Months at Fort Matanzas |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Pedro | 10 |
| Francisco | 15 |
| Julio | 12 |
| Juan | 19 |
| Carlos | 9 |
| Bernardo | 16 |

Using the chart “Fort Matanzas Duty”, create a bar graph showing how many months each man spent at Fort Matanzas. Arrange the men alphabetically. Be sure to title your graph, label the axes, use appropriate and consistent scales, and graph your data accurately.

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Question 4 continued.

On the line below write a sentence describing your graph.

THINK
SOLVE
EXPLAIN

Fort Matanzas - The Little Fort with the Big Job Answers

Reading

1. Use the rubric for Short Response Reading Questions – 2 points
[S.S.S.], Level [bloom's taxonomy level 1 or 2]

Example of a Top-Score Response

The Spanish built a wooden watchtower surrounded by a stockade somewhere near the south end of Anastasia Island as early as 1569 to keep watch against enemies approaching from the south. This shows that they were concerned about the potential danger of an unguarded inlet.

2. (c) [S.S.S.], Level [bloom's taxonomy level 1 or 2]
 3. (c) [S.S.S.], Level [bloom's taxonomy level 1 or 2]
 4. (b) [S.S.S.], Level [bloom's taxonomy level 1 or 2]
5. Use the rubric for Extended Response Reading Questions – 4 points
[S.S.S.], Level [bloom's taxonomy level 1 or 2]

Example of a Top-Score Response

It was important to guard the Matanzas Inlet for at least two reasons. For one thing, it was another way out of St. Augustine. During the British siege of 1740 when the British had the main inlet blocked, the Spanish were able to send a boat out this back way and bring back supplies from Cuba. However, without a real fort there, it was also a weak point. The British might try to sneak in, sail up the river, and attack St. Augustine from the rear. Once a fort was built there, St. Augustine was never attacked again.

Writing

For All – Use the rubric for Florida Writes! – 6 points

1. LA.B.1.2.2, LA.B.2.2.3, LA.B.2.2.6
2. LA.B.1.2.2, LA.B.2.2.3, LA.B.2.2.5

Math

1. b) MA.
2. Use the rubric for Short Response Math Questions – 2 points
MA.

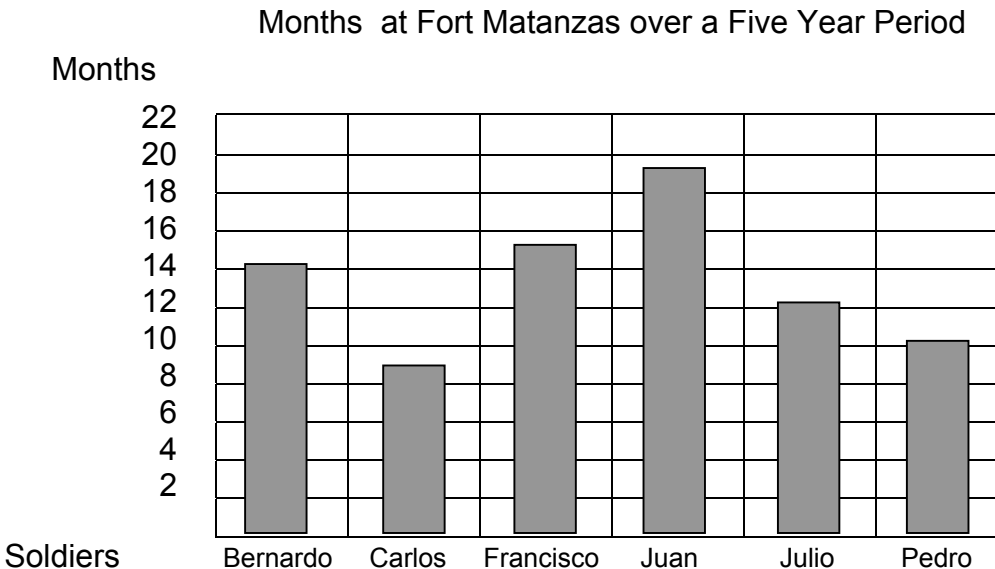
Example of a Top-Score Response

A)
$$\begin{array}{r} 49.5 \\ \times 12 \\ \hline 594 \text{ inches} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 18 \text{ varas each side} \\ 33 \overline{)594} \\ \underline{33} \\ 264 \\ \underline{264} \\ 00 \end{array}$$

3. c) MA.
4. Use the rubric for Extended Response Math Questions – 4 points
MA.E.1.2.1

Example of a Top-Score Response-- (see next page)



On the line below write a sentence describing your graph.

THINK
SOLVE
EXPLAIN

During a five year period, Juan worked the most months at Fort Matanzas, and Carlos worked the least.

Note to Teachers:

In addition, a field trip to Fort Matanzas combined with classroom discussion and activities may aid the student in completing the following Science and Social Studies Strands and Standards:

Science

Strand--How living things interact with their environment

1. The student understands the competitive, interdependent, cyclic nature of living things in the environment.
2. The student understands the consequences of using limited natural resources.

Social Studies

Strand-- Time, Continuity, and Change

1. The student understands historical chronology and the historical perspective.
4. The student understands US history to 1880.
6. The student understands the history of Florida and its people.

Strand-- People, Places, and Environment

2. The student understands the interactions of people and the physical environment.

Strand--Production, Distribution, and Consumption

1. The student understands how scarcity requires individuals and institutions to make choices about how to use available resources.

Resources:

Sunshine State Standards can be found at <http://finr.edu/doe/menu/sss.htm>

Grading Rubrics can be found at <http://www.finr.edu/sas/fcat.htm> under "What Every Teacher Should Know About FCAT"

Additional information about FCAT can be found at <http://www.finr.edu/sas/fcat.htm>